

CHS in the News



Tallahassee mom attributes reunion with child to Children's Home Society

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WTVL) — While April was Child Abuse Prevention Month, groups like Children's Home Society work year-round with families facing charges of child neglect to keep their kids at home instead of ending up in foster care.

Right now, nearly 100 families in the Tallahassee area are able to be together.

WTVL's Abbey Maurer spoke to one mother, who didn't want her face on camera, but says the program not only changed her life, it saved her family.

"Being a parent is tough. It's frustrating. It can be difficult sometimes," said Cecka Green.

But when this Tallahassee mother of four fell on hard times, she temporarily gave her 1-year-old son to his godparents to care for. Three years later, she gets a call saying he was left at school and his godparents never came back for him.

"I was shocked. I was crying," said Green. "I didn't even know what to think and as a parent, you have all these differing thoughts going through your mind. Angry thoughts. Emotional thoughts."

The Florida Abuse Hotline was called and after learning it was neglect and not abuse, the Children's Home Society stepped in.

"No one goes into parenting, whether planned or unplanned, with expectations that they won't be able to keep their children and will have to be removed and not going to be good parents and guardians of precious life, but life happens," said Green.

That's when CHS counselors like Ayana Maxwell are there to work with the families to address the core problem.

"You have a lot of parents who try to fight us on it, but we do just remind them of the importance of why we're here and that we're here to help and not damage and keep their families together and stable as much as we can," said Maxwell.

The goal? Reducing the need for foster care.

"We know that children graduate high school at higher rates when they're able to stay in their family," said Maxwell. "They avoid teen pregnancy, able to hold jobs down better."

CHS worked with Ms. Green on making a case plan to re-introduce and reunify her and her 4-year-old son, while he went to live with a foster family temporarily. Saying goodbye at the end of each visitation was hard.

“The look he gave me was like mommy, ‘Why are you going? Are you leaving me?’ So that was the difficult part,” said Green.

But she was determined to do the work needed to get her son back.

“It’s just something about a mother that nobody else can ever replace,” said Green. “I don’t care how good of a caregiver you are. You can never be that child’s mother.”

And six months later at Thanksgiving, he got to go home with her for good.

“The rewarding part is seeing kids smile and happy to be with their family,” said Maxwell.

And to all families out there struggling, this mom says keep going.

“I have him back and I’m complete now. So keep going and don’t give up,” said Green. “Can’t nobody tell me I don’t love my kids because I would do whatever for my kids.”

A now stronger mom with the forever bond of her son.

To report child abuse or neglect, and how to learn more about the signs, [click here](#) .

Also, Children’s Home Society is in need of case managers. You just need a bachelor’s degree, preferably a human services degree, and they will train you.